

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims preliminarily as follows:

1. (cancelled)

1 2. (currently amended) Method according to claim 1, further comprising applying
2 the electrical voltage over the pipeline between the electrical contacts until
3 ~~characterized in that the heating takes place such that~~ a zone of ice having thickness of at
4 least 5 mm closest to ~~the~~ an inner wall of the pipeline ~~will melt~~, such that ~~the~~
5 permeability flow of the fluid through the pipeline is resumed or maintained, ~~such that~~
6 ~~chemical injection or depressurization become feasible methods for plug removal or~~
7 ~~hindrance of plug formation of ice and hydrates.~~

3-4. (cancelled)

1 5. (new) A method for counteracting plugging by at least ice in a subsea pipeline,
2 which is electrically conductive, exhibits ohmic resistance, and is a conduit for a fluid,
3 comprising directly heating the pipeline electrically to a temperature above the melting point
4 of ice, but below the melting point of a hydrate.

1 6. (new) A method as in claim 5, further comprising heating the pipeline by
2 applying a electrical voltage over the pipeline between two electrical contacts and thereby
3 passing an electric current through the pipeline.

1 7. (new) A method as in claim 2, further comprising subsequent application of a
2 second plug-counteracting procedure to remove any ice or hydrate plug from within the
3 pipeline.

1 8. (new) A method as in claim 7, in which the second plug-counteracting procedure
2 is chemical injection.

1 9. (new) A method as in claim 7, in which the second plug-counteracting procedure
2 is depressurization.

1 10. (new) A system for direct electric heating of a subsea pipeline, which is
2 electrically conductive, exhibits ohmic resistance, and is a conduit for a fluid hydrocarbon,
3 which pipeline can be blocked by plugs of ice and hydrates, the system comprising:
4 an electrical current source;
5 a support device supporting the current source;
6 a first and a second subsea electrical connector, each in electrical contact with the
7 pipeline
8 a riser cable that extends between the support device and the pipeline, said riser cable
9 comprising a first and a second electrical conductor for conducting electrical current between
10 the current source to a respective one of the subsea electrical connectors, whereby an electric
11 circuit is formed from the electrical current source, through the first electrical conductor, over
12 the first subsea electrical connector, through the pipeline, over the second subsea electrical
13 connector, and through the second electrical conductor back to the current source;
14 in which the electrical current source is provided for generating current sufficient to
15 cause heating of the pipeline to a temperature above the melting point of ice, but below the
16 melting point of a hydrate.

1 11. (new) A system as in claim 10, in which the electrical current source is provided
2 for generating current sufficient and until a zone of ice having thickness of at least 5 mm
3 closest to an inner wall of the pipeline melts, such that flow of the fluid through the pipeline
4 is resumed or maintained.

1 12. (new) A system as in claim 10, in which the support device is a surface vessel.

1 13. (new) A system as in claim 12, in which the vessel is equipped to extend the
2 riser cable down to the pipeline for connection of the first and a second electrical conductors
3 to the respective first and a second subsea electrical connectors.